HR, PH, JNS, JW, LF

The Watergate Caper, Supp. notes 7/29/72 Harold Weisberg

Jim Lesar quotes Fletcher Prouty, formerly military in CIA, as saying McCord is anything but an incompetent bungler and Dulles as describ ing him as "my best man" or "one of my best men". The occasion was one of those downings of an American plane over USSR. In this case the Russians seem to have announced it and the US seems to have said none was missing. It turned out that the plane was Dulles', Jim says a DC6, and that it had, actually, gotten lost. The men were later said to have been rescued by a Russian schoolteacher. I asked Jim if this was the Van incident and he thought it was (I thought that involved a different plane). When the men were back they were subjected to regular police stuff on, of all things, the ident. of the schoolteacher. There emerged a sketch. It was given to McCord. He came back in 24 hours with a large batch of 8x10 glossys, threw them on the table and asked the men to select the Russian. They did, promptly, and it turned out to be a Russian who had been in the US on some kind of delegation and was believed by CIA to be intelligence. Perhaps, but when McCord spent those years as a radio expert for the FBI, what was he doing for CIA throwing his specialty away?

ReCaddy's grand jury reluctance in which he would not say if he met a client within 1/4 mile of Watergate, Bob Smith had said that Chotiner had an unlisted place near it. It now turns out that he really lives far away, at Srpingfield, Va., according to Lesar yesterday, but that Robert Mardian lives at500 23rd NW.

Jim also says that the Miami States' Attorney asked Bud to check out two phone numbers. This suggests that he lacks confidence in official sources in DC. One is 293-2746, listed to Howard Hunt, Jr. The other is 544-9789, a pay phone in District jail (where the 5 men were). Jim doesn't know the times or the reasons but supposedly it is to trace places to which calls from Miami were made.

NYTimes 7/25 may provide source. It reports calls from Barker's Miami office to various places, including unlisted Republican phone DC. Neither this nor next day's followup disclose source(s), but seems likely court records in Demo suit. Jim says a computer printout is an attachment to one. I'd suggested he look at and perhaps copy all the records other than legal motions so I could circulate. He didn't have time. On this printout is a record of expenses repaid. It includes $200 to Chotiner for phone calls. This is a modest item, but what makes me wonder is why so prominent a man doesn't have a charge card and use it for such things.

Also interesting is the fact that another federal agency tipped the FBI off on the presence of an involved car at the Miami airport. One of the obvious possibilities is that an aviation agency did the obvious, got the license numbers of cars registered to those involved and checked the airport parking lot. Search disclosed evidence of an earlier trip to Washington, an old Hartinger passport and a link to the Doral Hotel, where McG hqed.

Foreign calls were to Chile and Venezuela. The source of Barker's money is said to have been $89,000 depoisted from Chile in Mexico, from earlier accounts.

That others had some kind of involvement in indicated in reports that unnamed associates of these men attempted to "remove 'incriminating documents'" from the car ahead of the feds.

Interesting that the Post hasn't begun to indicate these things. Their interest in the story seems to have cooled a bit.

Bud has a personal relationship with the Miami States' attorney, whose name for the moment escapes me, going back to his days with the Senate.